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Govt vehicles to be transformed into CNG system

The government has taken up some major decisions to transform all government and semi-government vehicles into CNG system immediately in the initial phase to contain air pollution in the city, reports BSS.

Six more new CNG filling stations will be set up at different places of the central transport pool. Four CNG filling stations are now in operation in the city.

The execution of the government ban on import of leaded fuel, encouraging import of lead free petrol, reduction of sulfur in diesel, and introduction of catalytic converter are the other decisions to check air pollution by automobiles.

The decisions were taken at a meeting at the conference room of the Environment and Forest Ministry with its Secretary Syed Margub Murshed in the chair.

Representatives from the ministry of finance, BRTA, BRTC, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, CNG Gas Ltd., and Transport pool were present in the meeting.

The meeting asked the authorities concerned to prepare a status report on various problems following marketing of lead contained fuel oil by Eastern Refinery, country's only petroleum products processing unit.

The meeting also decided to immediately take up a comprehensive master plan for preservation of water of river Buriganga, Sitalakhy and Karnaphuli rivers and issuance of no objection certificate (NOC) on environment.

BNP condemns torture on arrested leaders

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Dhaka City convenor Sadek Hossein Khoka yesterday condemned the alleged torture on some of the party leaders in the jail *hajat*.

In a statement, he alleged that BNP Dharmundi Thana convenor and ward commissioner Abdul Latif, and leaders Abdul Aziz and Mujibur Rahman were being tortured in the jail.

Demanding immediate release of the leaders, Khoka also protested the arrest of Yaar Mohammad Lal, a BNP Betagi Thana unit leader.

Khoka said that the government has resorted to repression after it became alienated from the people.

Bangla Academy confers fellowship on 5 personalities

By Staff Correspondent

Bangla Academy has conferred fellowship on five noted personalities this year for their outstanding contribution in their respective fields, a press release said yesterday.

The fellows are: Prof Khan, Sarwar Murshid, A M N Gazul Huq, Prof A F M Salahuddin Anniad, Barin Majumdar and Lutfor Rahman Sarker.

Bangla Academy has so far awarded fellowship to 33 persons for their outstanding contributions in art, culture, literature, philosophy and social welfare.

The fellowship will be given at the annual general meeting of the academy on November 26, the press release added.

Ekushey

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proud as Ekushey February has been glorified internationally.

Meanwhile, Bangla Academy authorities today decided to place wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city on November 21 at 10:30 am in observance of the UNESCO declaration.

Bangladesh Federation of Teachers' Association, Bangladesh Government Secondary Teachers' Association and Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad issued statements congratulating the UNESCO for its decision.

UNB adds: Acting president of Bangladesh Awami League Amir Hossain Amu in a statement yesterday said UNESCO's decision has reflected the world community's acknowledgment of the sacrifice of language movement martyrs as well as the Bengali nation for the cause of Mother tongue.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia thanked UNESCO for declaring February 21 as International Mother Language Day.

In a statement she said, "The acknowledgment is a great pride for our nation and it is also an instance of paying tribute to the sacrifice of Salam, Rafiq, Jabbar and other martyrs."

Jamaat Ameer Prof Golam Azam hailed the UNESCO for decision and said the entire nation is glad today.

Meghnaghat Power Project Site developer fails again to meet deadline

By Sharier Khan

CWHEC, has been from the country since August 20.

As per the last revised work schedule, set by the Power Development Board (PDB) which is supervising the whole project, CWHEC should have given a notice to the authorities for inspection 15 days before the deadline for handing over of the project site. But the Chinese company did not give any such notice.

Besides, PDB sources said the quality of site development work was far below expectation. However, it was up to the project consultant to evaluate and comment on CWHEC's job.

This delay in land development may lead PDB to pay a fine of 10,000 US dollars per day to AES till the site is handed over to it. PDB would fine CWHEC the same amount for the delay.

Originally, CWHEC was

scheduled to complete the work by late July this year. But as it failed to do so, PDB told AES that the land could not be handed over to it before September due to inefficiency of CWHEC.

AES said that in case of delay, PDB should pay a fine of 10,000 dollars per day as per contractual provisions. However, at the request of the government, AES agreed to provide a "cushion" to PDB till September.

As CWHEC again failed to keep the schedule, PDB told AES earlier this month that the site could not be handed over before November. AES then argued that the delay had already affected its economics and it may have to increase the levied power-tariff due to this. Finally, at the request of the government, AES had agreed to take the project site on November 15.

Suspension of 4 magistrates angers administrative officers

Some 500 administrative officers yesterday vented their anger over suspension of four magistrates by the Election Commission for negligence of duty during the recent by-polls in Tangail-8 parliamentary constituency.

The officials at a meeting at the Administrative Service Association Office at BIMAN Bhawan in the city put pressure on the Association leaders to take up the matter.

One of the magistrates, preferring anonymity, told UNB that the four magistrates who were on duty at four centres on the election day were in no way responsible for the irregularities in the voting, which they were charged with.

Magistrates and police were posted in the polling centres to look into law and order and not the voting. Voting is conducted by presiding officers," he said protesting punitive action ordered by the Election Commission.

The leaders of the Association announced that they would submit memorandums to the Chief Election Commissioner; establishment, cabinet secretaries and the principal secre-

Khaleda, Jamaat leaders discuss issues

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a meeting with three top leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and two senior leaders of her party last night discussed various issues relating to the current anti-government movement and the planned meeting of chiefs of the four component alliance, sources concerned said.

The meeting held at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament was attended by Jamaat Secretary General Matiur Rahman Nizami, assistant secretary general Mohammad Kamaruzzaman and publicity secretary Abdul Kader Molla, BNP Vice Chairman M Shamsul Islam and the Chairperson's press advisor Anwar Zahir.

The EC release yesterday also announced the names of suspended officials saying some irregularities took place in four centres during the November 15 by-elections due to negligence and irregularities in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

The suspended magistrates and presiding officers are:

Centre: Boali Government Primary School.

Magistrate: Khan M Nurul Amin, Assistant Commissioner, Madarupur Collectorate.

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Y2K glitch: Ctg, Mongla ports yet to take steps

By Mustak Hossain

Bangladesh's two largest sea ports are still vulnerable to the millennium bug, despite government reminders to fix the problem before the December 31 deadline.

Serajul Huq, deputy director of the government's Y2K cell, said they requested updates from Chittagong and Mongla on their Y2K status several months back, but got a poor response from both.

The Y2K cell of Bangladesh Computer Council is yet to get an response from the country's main Chittagong Port Authority regarding their millennium bug preparedness," said Huq last week.

"Mongla Port Authority send us some information but the CPA are yet to send us information regarding their status."

"We (the Y2K Cell) have send

US embassy clarification on Holzman's remarks

The US Embassy in Dhaka has clarified a press report about Ambassador Holzman's request to BNP for not calling hajat on December 2, the National Immunization Day, reported UNB.

A USIS press release yesterday said, in order to allow necessary transportation of vaccines and medical personnel, the Ambassador requested the BNP leader not to call hajat on December 2 and two days before and after this date to allow the immunization day to proceed without obstruction.

"This meeting came as a follow-up of an October 27 letter that Ambassador Holzman sent to the secretaries general of the BNP, the Jatiya Party, and the Jamaat-e-Islami requesting them not to disrupt the success of National Immunization Day by calling hajats," the release added.

SC restores poll symbol 'Plough' to Ershad-led JP

The Supreme Court yesterday restored the election symbol 'Plough' to Jatiya Party led by HM Ershad, reports UNB.

The order of the Appellate Division came on an appeal by the Jatiya Party against the decision of a Division Bench of the High Court allowing Mutassim Billha of Jatiya Party headed by Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury to contest a by-election with 'Plough' symbol, said a press release.

Barrister Rafiqul Haq appeared for the petitioner.

Zia, Manzoor

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capture state power through coup, killing and conspiracies.

These quarters know that an elected government cannot be ousted through hajats and agitations but they have been inspired by the recent military coup in Pakistan, he said.

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"This is because it involves issues which effect a large number of people, future of industries and industrialisation in the country."

He said Bangladesh was not

prepared for the first round of negotiations and therefore failed to take advantages which were there.

It opened up the economy too fast when there were no pressure to dismantle the tariff barrier. "But we could have taken much advantage had we gone through negotiations. India did not do it at the same pace and could take much more advantage."

"Bangladesh could not undo the past but will be responsible for what happens in future," said the eminent economist.

Tofail Ahmed said most of the LDCs were frequently shifting their positions as they were busy trying to negotiate their own interest.

He said ahead of the Millennium Round in Seattle on November 30, the G-77 met in Beirut where there were a consensus on opposing second round of negotiations without assessing the commitments of the Uruguay Round.

They said during the Uruguay Round, most of the developing countries were unaware of the consequences of the negotiations and at the end of the day signed agreements as mere spectators."

The seminar, "GATT, Liberalisation and Bangladesh Trade" was organised by Integrated Community and Industrial Development (INCIDIN) Bangladesh, a research and advocacy agency, at the CIRDAP auditorium in the city. Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Secretary General of Workers Party Rashed Khan Menon and former finance minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit were among others who spoke at the seminar, chaired by Professor Rehman Sobhan.

He suggested Bangladesh, being a member of SAARC, come forward with a group of actions within the framework of SAARC.

"This is because it involves issues which effect a large number of people, future of industries and industrialisation in the country."

He said implementation of commitments made so far by the WTO members in the Uruguay Round Agreement and subsequent WTO ministerial meetings, where differential and special treatment to LDCs for market access, trade capacity building, technical assistance and debt relief were

promised; duty-free market ac-

BMA polls

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said polling stations in Narail, Kurigram, Munshiganj and Natrakona conducted an open ballot, violating election rules.

In Dhaka, voting seriously disrupted traffic when the road outside the BMA bhaban was blocked without any public notice. Hundreds of motorists were stuck on both side of National Press Club, which is located on the opposite side of the road, while the election proceeded.

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One to die for killing woman

NETROKONA, Nov 18: A court here today sentenced one person to death for killing a woman, reports UNB.

Court sources said Durgesh Chandra Das, son of Dinesh Chandra Das of Madarupur, was given the capital punishment for killing Meena, wife of Dilip Shah of village Satpal in the same thana on June 29 in 1995.

Durgesh, an employee of Dilip's typewriting shop, stabbed Meena to death when she refused to give him loan.

Examining all records and witnesses, the judge AKM Iftaque Hossain found Durgesh guilty of the killing and pronounced the verdict.

However, he admitted he didn't have up-to-date information about the problem, since the government just added ports to his portfolio after removing them earlier.

"We are trying to gather more information about the situation as soon as possible," said Huda.

All sectors, including finance, health, transport and energy, need contingency plans

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